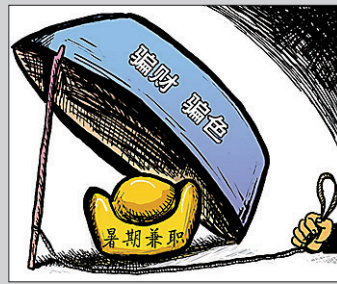


YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

今日北京

BEIJING TODAY

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Square OneSpending a large fortune hasn't won Didi many dedicated users. **Page 4**Scammers
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Intern CrazeCon artists follow the money in China's latest education rush. **Page 5**Language
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Italy's BestSwitzerland and Italy are teaming up to share their culture. **Page 7**City Gets
Tough on
Seatbelts

Both drivers and passengers who shirk Beijing's seatbelt laws could face rising fines and other punishments.

But when compared to the tougher punishments in other Chinese cities, the new regulations seem to fall short. **Page 3**Beijing Police Bust Rich
Heir for Running Meth

BY DIAO DIAO

When a wealthy Beijing man's parents told him to get a job, they never expected he would take a page from the American TV drama *Breaking Bad*.

On the morning of September 5, the Chaoyang District Police were given a tip that the 25-year-old *fuerdai* surnamed Zhang had purchased 1.6 kilograms of methamphetamine in Sichuan province.

Zhang was bringing the drugs via long-distance bus from Wuhan into Beijing with intent to sell, police said.

The bus driver told police that Zhang was extremely anxious and asked him to open the door before the bus neared Dahongmen Station in Fengtai district on September 16.

"I think he wanted to punch me," the driver said. "I saw he had a knife by his waist. I was really concerned about the safety of the other passengers so I let him off early."

Zhang was arrested immediately after getting off the bus. The drugs were found on his person.

The most puzzling part of the crime is Zhang's background.

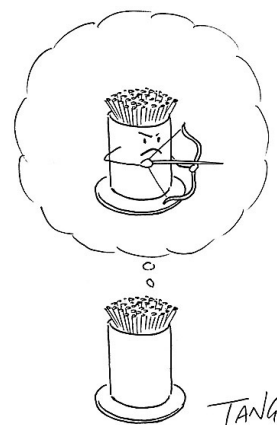
Born to wealthy parents and heir to

a small fortune, Zhang was never want for money. However, his parents had started to pressure him for being lazy and never holding a job.

Zhang said he decided to enter the drug trade to prove to his parents that he could support himself.

Nanfang Daily called Zhang an example of everything that is wrong in the education of China's rich heirs.

With busy parents more focused on earning money than educating their children, many grow up in an environment devoid of morals that hoists up money as the only right in the world, the paper said in an editorial. ■



Comics by Tango (tango2010)



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BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

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Running Buddies a Growing Business

BY YANG XIN

Lin Nan is a 20-something owner of an online shop in Shuijiang, Zhejiang province. When he's not brokering sales, Lin spends his leisure time on exercise. But for Lin, the hobby has turned into a side business as clients on WeChat hire him to be a running buddy.

"I have four to five regular clients who pay 15 yuan per hour," Lin said. He earns about 3,000 yuan per month and has many clients on a waiting list.

It's not just the rich who are hiring running buddies.

Lin said his clients range from private enterprise managers to civil servants to students. All are concerned with physical exercise and health. One, an office worker surnamed Jiang, pays Lin 500 yuan out of her 3,000 yuan salary each month.

"She used to spend more on a gym membership, but she did not go often. Since she is young and single, she doesn't want to risk running alone at night after she gets off work," Lin said.

Lin's business has grown with reporters of young women being abducted or killed during the first half of the year.

"Many of my clients have low endurance or other limitations, so I have to encourage



Photo by dakungbao

them while we run," he said. But topics such as their love life and other relationships are off limits. "You never want their boyfriends or husbands to be suspicious," Lin said.

Chen Shuo is a newcomer in the emerging market. "I have a considerable amount of leisure time after work, and accompanying other joggers is a great way to keep myself in shape," Chen said.

As with Lin, most of Chen's clients are female. He earns an extra 1,000 yuan each month as a part-time running buddy.

As the business operates outside the boundaries of any known profession, Chen

suggested those thinking of marketing themselves as running buddies should choose their clients carefully and avoid running too late at night.

"It is possible that someone may take advantage of the growing demand to twist the business into something illegal," said Chen Xi, a lawyer at the Fujian Yuandong-dacheng Law Firm.

"The parties should draw up a written agreement to clarify things like run times, routes, fees and obligations. Clients should also inform their friends whenever they go out running," Chen said. ■

Poor Attitude Scares Off Girl's Sponsor

BY YANG XIN

After four years of supporting Ling Ling, an impoverished girl abandoned in Mianyang, Sichuan province, Lao Feng expected a warmer welcome on his visit.

Feng, a pedicab driver in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, said the distant look on Ling Ling's face and her cold attitude made him question whether the hundreds of yuan he sent every month would have been better spent on another child.

Ling Ling showed no sense of appreciation or excitement and left home to avoid seeing him when he lived in her house for a night, Feng said.

As a pedicab driver, Feng can hardly be considered well off. Four years ago, he and his wife left Mianyang to work in Wuxi. Together they earn about 4,000 yuan per month.

After their meeting in April, Feng told Ling Ling's grandmother that he would continue to send money if Ling Ling would only give him a call. As of the first week of October, the call has yet to come.

But Ling Ling's problem may have more to do with social phobia than ingratitude.

An investigation by the *Chengdu Commercial Daily* found that Ling Ling was abandoned 15 years ago. "Mr. Feng is a good man in my mind. But if I would choose, I would rather be the one giving charity," Ling Ling said.

When asked why she would not give Feng a call, Ling Ling said she refused to admit that she was in need of money.

"Most impoverished students have social phobia," said Luo Shu, a psychologist at Deyang People's Hospital. "Their poor backgrounds and harsh experiences affect how they experience the world, and these negative emotions can be amplified when they meet the donors on whom they depend."

Luo Shu said that donors who want to meet the children they sponsor should not approach them with sympathy. "Respect them. Don't pity them. It's not the child's job to convince you that your donation is worth it."

After the report was published, Feng said he had a better idea how Ling Ling must feel and that he is considering resuming his donations.

But while it may seem to be a happy ending, Ling Ling's story has opened new questions about the government's apparent lack of social safety nets in Mianyang and its neighboring villages. ■

Public Uproar Over School's Taoist Garden

BY SHU PENGQIAN

The line between superstition and science can often be blurry in Chinese society but schools are some of the few places expected to be totally devoid of superstition.

It's an assumption that makes the recent landscaping project at Weijia Middle School in Baoshan, Yunnan province quite surprising.

In an attempt to beautify the campus, the school's leaders approved a project to construct a green belt in the shape of the Eight Trigrams, a series of symbols associated with geomancy and fortune telling.

The Eight Trigrams used to be used in burial site design to ward off ill luck and demons. Finding them incorporated into a public school design is troubling at best.

"We all know what the Eight Trigrams stand for in Chinese culture. The white streetlights around the symbol make the garden especially creepy to walk through at night," said one of the teachers, who spoke on conditions of anonymity.

"I've seen similar shapes incorporated into other green belts, but the design at Weijia Middle School is really over the top," said a nearby resident surnamed Chen.

But not everyone thinks the design is a bad idea. One nearby resident surnamed Zhao noted that the trigrams are a symbol of Taoism. "It's not worth the fuss, and the design can help to popularize another element of traditional culture," he said.



The school's Principal Zhu Yanrui spoke out on October 14 to defend the landscaping choice as "artistic."

"The implied meaning of the Eight Trigrams in our design is that our school is always getting better and the students here will have a good future," he said. "We never thought the green belt pattern could cause such an uproar."

The school said it will demolish the green belt and begin work on a new landscape design. ■



CFP Photos

Wuxi Parents Build Their Own Private Academy

BY LYNNE WANG

Nine parents from Jiangsu province have invested 1 million yuan to construct the Huangting Academy, a private school for their own children.

Modeled on the *sishu* teaching method of the Song Dynasty, Huangting Academy offers students a chance to explore their own interests while providing comprehensive training in traditional culture.

The campus resembles a classical courtyard with a rabbit hutch, a fishpond and a

small garden that allows students to experience planting and harvesting their own vegetables. In addition to the normal curriculum of Chinese, English and math, the school has compulsory lessons in Confucianism, martial arts, calligraphy and traditional medicine.

"My son resisted the pointless homework and rigid education that began in second grade. But he was still very interested in science," said a sponsor surnamed Wang. "I wanted to create a novel envi-



ronment that could inspire him to learn on his own."

"After talking with other parents who had similar experiences and feelings, we decided to build a non-profit and mutually supportive academy on our own," he said.

Having grown up in an environment of endless exams and rote memorization, the parents hope to combine modern teaching methods with traditional culture.

The 10 students are separated into two classes according to age. All are encouraged to learn through hands-on work.

In biology class, students are required feed the rabbits and dogs to learn about animal habits. Morals are learned through readings of ancient literature.

Physical exercise is also an important part of Huangting Academy's curriculum: every student has to exercise at least three hours each day. Mornings have a one-hour mountaineering session, and students must hike at least 10 kilometers each week.

"Although it's difficult to say what kind of person my daughter will become a decade from now, I just want her to have her own dreams and to think independently," said a parent and teacher at the academy surnamed Mao.

China's current education system focuses on "producing" students rather than offering personalized cultivation, Mao said. Its endless exams and memorization result in adults who feel lost and lack any passion, he said. ■



Bear Makes a Meal Out of Boy's Arm

A 9-year-old boy named Congcong learned the hard way why you are not supposed to climb over the guardrails at the zoo.

Congcong reportedly leaped over the guardrail at Pingdingshan Hebin Park's zoo and attempted to hand-feed a bear. Confused about where the food ended and the arm began, the bear spent 10 minutes gnawing through the boy's tissue and bone before help arrived.

Staff at Pingdingshan Number 152 Hospital amputated what remained of Congcong's right arm. The bear's enclosure has since been closed to the public.

(Guangming Daily)

Man Files Report Over No-Show Prostitute

On October 9, a 26-year-old man from Anhui province named Xiaoqian entered a police office in Ningbo province seeking to file a crime report.

Xiaoqian said the prostitute he booked over WeChat on October 8 never showed up to service him. After communicating with the woman and agreeing to pay 300 yuan for her services, Xiaoqian went to the ATM to withdraw the money and wait for her arrival.

When she never arrived, Xiaoqian called her and received no answer.

Qiuyi, the officer on duty, reportedly criticized and "educated" the man, although he could have been punished under laws that prohibit the solicitation of sex.

(Sohu News)

Ex-Boyfriend Demands Return of Sperm

The 30-something Miss Yuan might be the recipient of the most awkward breakup text ever.

In a message from earlier this month, her former boyfriend, the 48-year-old Mr. Fu, demanded the return of three items: the hair conditioner she used while staying at his apartment, 300 yuan in hair care expenses and three months' worth of sperm.

Their relationship soured when Fu suggested the two move in together. When Yuan refused, he beat her and threw her out. A week of angry text messages culminated with Fu's awkward demand.

(Xinan Evening News)

Fake Guanyin Gets 13 Years in Prison

On October 14, a Beijing court sentenced Shi Azha to 13 years in prison for swindling a devout Buddhist out of as much as 3.8 million yuan.

Shi, a 32-year-old woman from Fujian, came to Beijing a few years ago when she met her victim, a woman surnamed Wang, online.

She told Wang that she could communicate with spirits and was the reincarnation of the Avalokiteshvara Buddha.

Within a year, Shi had convinced Wang to give her all her money and to sell her home and jewelry to "avert a family tragedy."

(People's Daily)

City Toughens Up Seatbelt Laws

BY DIAO DIAO

Beijing has updated its driving regulations to crack down on motorists who occupy emergency and public transportation lanes or who refuse to fasten their seatbelts.

The three actions have always carried a fine and a loss of points on one's license. Now the Beijing Traffic Management Bureau (BTMB) will also be empowered to record infractions. The seatbelt law applies to both drivers and passengers.

Seatbelts protect motorists during sharp turns and can save lives in the event of a crash.

While many drivers complain the belts are tight and uncomfortable, seatbelts are proven to dramatically reduce the number of crash-related fatalities.

According to industry data, wearing a



Photo provided by kaiping.gov.cn

seatbelt reduces one's chance of death in a frontend collision by 57 percent, in a side collision by 44 percent and in a rollover by 80 percent. Most developed countries severely penalize drivers who refuse to buckle up.

Beijing police said fewer than 20 percent of Beijing drivers wear their seatbelts. The bad habit is directly responsible for more than 400 deaths each year.

Under the new regulations, drivers who don't fasten their seatbelts can be fined 50

yuan. Passengers can be fined 20 yuan.

Police will instruct first-time offenders about the importance of wearing a seatbelt. Second-time offenders will be recorded in the new supervision system. Repeat offenders will have their personal and employment information exposed online.

Most commentators say the harsher punishments are long overdue. Weibo's most biting critics blasted China's drivers for having an obsession with health and longevity even while driving without a seatbelt or under the influence of alcohol.

Others said the fines are still too low, and that many Chinese cities have far harsher penalties for irresponsible drivers.

In one of the few voices of dissent, a woman surnamed Chen said the seatbelts in taxis are usually dirty or hidden under seat covers, making the new regulations unfairly stacked against passengers. ■



Photo by CFP

Taxi-Booking Apps Arrive at a Crossroads

BY LYNNE WANG

2014

will be remembered as the year China's taxi-booking apps began a brutal slugfest.

While Kuaidi Dache and Didi Dache have called for a truce after burning billions yuan to vie for the emerging market, the war is far from over.

Powered by the capital of the IT giants Alibaba and Tencent, the companies spent more than 2.4 billion yuan on one of the most direct strategies in marketing history: literally paying drivers and passengers to use their apps.

That massive financial investment has significantly transformed Beijing's taxi habits.

"Some 60 percent of our users only book taxis over Wi-Fi. That means more people prefer to book online than flag down a cab by the side of the road," said by Cheng Wei, CEO of Didi Daiche.

According to the data from Beijing-based Analysys International, taxi apps had more than 130 million registered

users as of the end of June.

Heavy investments by Alibaba and Tencent have frozen the budding market in a duopoly. Didi Dache controls 68.1 percent of the market while Kuaidi Dache controls 30.8 percent, according to a report from the Sootoo Research Institute.

But that high market share is unlikely to win more venture capital, especially after polls found that 30 percent of the users said they would abandon the service once Kuaidi Dache and Didi Dache stopped offering free money.

While subsidies may have won the apps users, keeping them is another challenge.

Actually, the companies had designed a perfect platform for retaining users at an earlier stage of development. When the apps were first launched, they allowed users to bid for taxis during rush hour by paying an additional percentage. "As long as the taxi apps keep involved in the relationship between passengers and drivers, their business model can be sustainable," said by Zhao Dong, chief oper-

ating officer at Kuaidi Dache.

But city officials closed that door, requiring taxi-booking apps to strip out the bidding feature if they wanted to stay legal.

With the subsidy money gone and their business model broken, the taxi apps may have to start over.

Search for a New Model

Inspired by the ride-sharing app Uber, Kuaidi Dache and Didi Dache are now experimenting with rentals as a solution.

At the end of 2013, Kuaidi acquired Bumblebee, a traditional car-rental firm in Shanghai. The company was renamed to Yihao Zhuanche in July. The derived service of Kuaidi Dache aims to win high-end clients who require short-term car use.

Didi also began fighting with U Taxi, an app that offers carpooling services, earlier this month.

"As a traditional industry, car rental agencies have been established for more than a decade and have a mature business model. Fleet operators get a 10 per-



Photo provided by Kuaidi Dache



Photo provided by Didi Dache

cent to 25 percent commission from their clients," said by Liu Xia, a reporter for *The Beijing News*.

"Gathering different levels of cars together to meet consumers' diverse demands could be a competitive new way to approach this industry," he said.

Compared to the system of additional flat fares, the business models of Yihao Zhuanche and U Taxi seem more adapted to market rules. "Whether or not consumers want to pay a higher price for a certain services largely depends on their demands, and this is a promising point of the model," Huxiu.com said in an editorial.

The battleground of Kuaidi Dache and Didi Dache is also tied up in online-to-offline business through their cooperation with real estate sites.

Earlier this month, Didi announced a partnership with Telecom Operators for mobile traffic and a customized package and terminal design. Kuaidi followed by announcing its plan to collaborate with China Unicom.

"The companies plan to decrease the costs for taxis to listen for passengers by subsidizing the mobile data cost," Liu said.

Embedding taxi-booking services into the interface of real estate websites and apps such as Sina Leju and Sohu Focus could help users call a cab when they want to check out an apartment.

It seems that there are a lot of possibilities for the current generation of taxi apps, but even with such large players the future remains uncertain. ■

Hustle for Overseas Experience has Grads Taking Bum Internships

BY YANG XIN

Overseas internships may be the most popular choice for students who see decreasing benefits to studying abroad.

For those who cannot find an opportunity through an international student organization or their college, intermediary institutions offer another way – for a price.

Imbalanced Experience

For student applicants, overseas internships offer not only broader horizons but also a chance to lay a foundation for future job hunting.

Intermediary institutions are often appealing because they provide opportunities for paid internships. But compared to the up front agency fees, these payments often amount to little.

“The rise of an intermediary industry in this field is largely unbalanced. Students may pay 100,000 yuan and get nothing more than a job in a local grocery store,” said Wang, a counselor for Jinjilie Overseas Education, a company offering internship placement.

Hu Xin, a student at Jiangnan University in Wuhan, took an internship in Nevada over the summer. During the internship she spent eight hours per day cleaning rooms. The “opportunity” cost her 40,000 yuan in total.

“My internship will be meaningless if it turns out to be export labor,” said Liu Ye, a student of tourism management in Qingdao who is headed abroad.

Dubious ‘Agents’

“Our overseas internships are all paid and offer enough to make ends meet,” said one overseas internship agent in Chongqing. However, when asked exactly what kind of jobs awaited the outbound students, he could only say they were in the service industry.

Charlatans are nothing new in the wild and largely unregulated frontier of Chinese education “services.” But few parents are experienced enough to tell a con artist from a company.

As a co-op program with 40 years of history, Summer Work & Travel Program (SWT) is supported by the US government and offers foreign students access to paid internships in the US. Its services on the Chinese mainland devolve into a dark mess in spite of US government funding.

“SWT is actually operated by education intermediaries, some of whom use the parents’ lack of understanding of bilateral policies and access to authentic information to make a profit,” said an insider named Fan Hong (pseudonym).

According to a report in the *Yangcheng Evening News* in 2013, almost all applicants for international internships on the mainland paid 20,000 yuan in agency fees. Similar services in Australia, Taiwan and Hong Kong charge 5,000, 9,000 and 15,000 yuan respectively.

Intermediaries who charge more rarely offer better service. Most do little more than assist students in filling out application forms and arranging interviews. “Visa processing and transport arrangements are paid by the student, and the final job position and safety guarantee is handled by the US parent,” said a receptionist surnamed Cen at Guangdong Education Service and International Exchange (GESIE).

Lack of Regulation

The US tightly controls which agencies can participate in SWT. Currently, there are only 47 qualified institutions in this field. In China, however, regulations on the intermediaries are rather loose.

The overseas internship intermediary market has as many bad eggs as it has good ones. “For students, the overseas internship is more like an adventure. Whether it will be worth it or not depends entirely on your luck,” said Zhang Zheng, a reporter for Jinchu.net.

There is no minimum qualification for companies that want to jump into the internship business. The growing consumption power of many parents is enticing ever more cultural companies – more than a few of which are bogus – to seek a piece of the action.

Finding a Solution

“Chinese police, education and diplomatic departments should learn from how the US Department of State manages its recognized internship offers. Institutions in charge of internship recommendations are strictly regulated,” said Li Jianping, a commentator on Sina.

“There needs to be a public index of legitimate overseas intermediary agents. What’s more, educational departments should function as a watchdog of relevant intermediaries. From verifying their qualifications to supervising their business operations, they have

no shortage of obligations,” said Ji Peng, a teacher at Qingdao Jinshuilu Primary School in Shandong province.

Collecting that information and making it available to the public is the most important step if the government hopes to boot out the cheaters and protect students, said a teacher surnamed Luo in the Graduate Career Center of the Capital Institute of Physical Education. ■

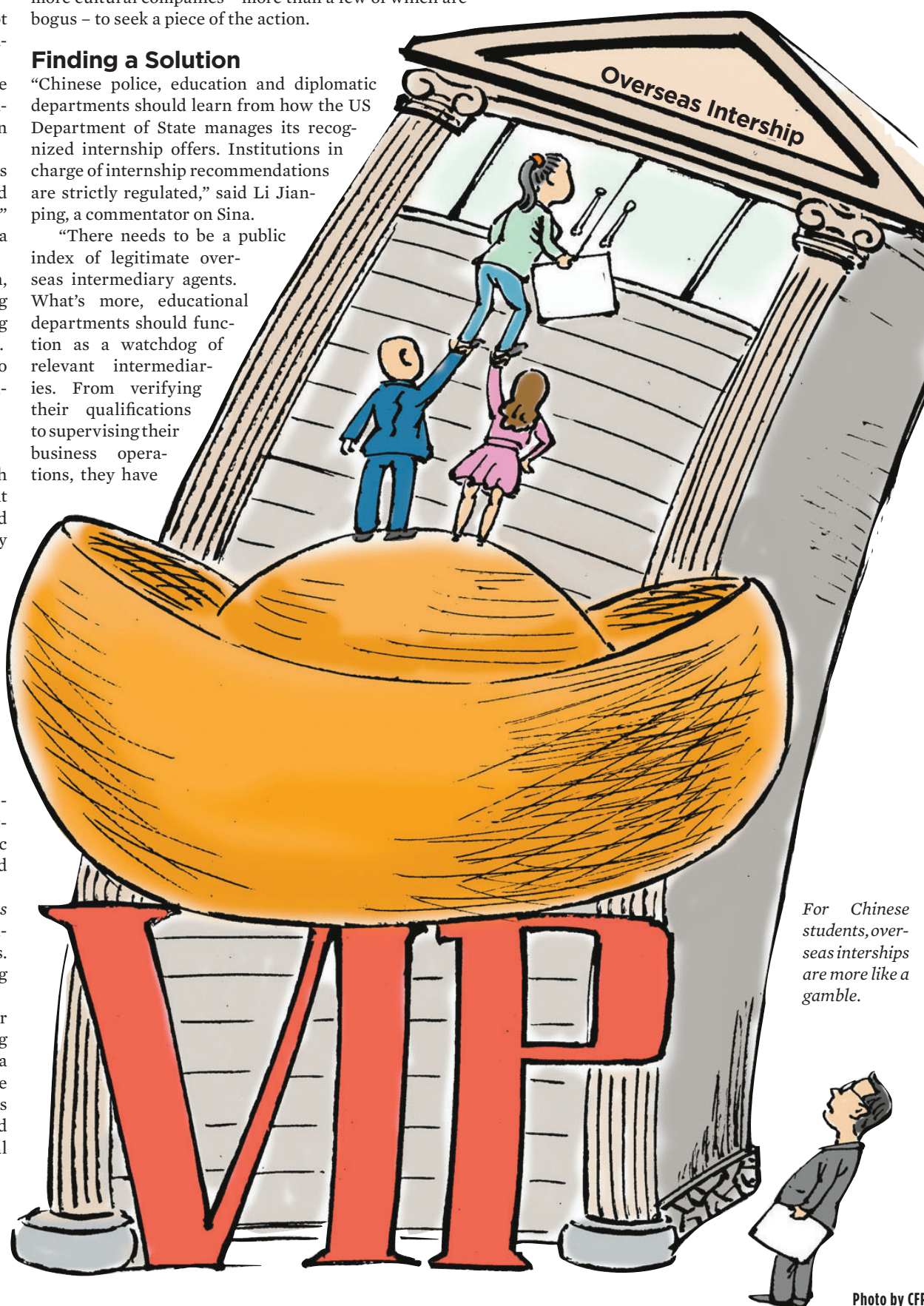


Photo by CFP



"Two German Architectures" is giving Chinese viewers new insights into urban development.

Exhibition Traces Post-War German Architecture

BY YANG XIN

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Goethe-Institut is presenting an exhibition on the divergence of East and West German architecture in the post-war years.

More than 60 years ago, Germany was split into the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. This exhibition some 20 years later marks the first attempt to review the concurrent architectural developments in the two German states.

With 1,217 photos, drawings and plans, as well as 40 architectural models and specially constructed displays, the exhibit gives viewers a chance to see the parallel

development of architectural styles across Germany in the context of their meaning and function.

Unlike most exhibitions, "Two German Architectures" approaches its subject with more questions than answers. It provides a new basis for comparative studies by publishing unknown material from the West and East German archives.

"Architecture is like a mirror which reflects the history and status of a city. The exhibition in Beijing is expected to motivate discussions about historical architectures in Germany among Asian people," said Enrico Brandt, head of cultural affairs at the German Embassy.

In order to prevent the content in the

exhibition from being seen as purely one-dimensional and to the keep the show from separating into East and West, curators have deliberately avoided imposing a time-line on the exhibit.

Even though politics were an inevitable force in the period, the exhibition does not contain many political elements. "For the audience, a basic knowledge about the political background of the exhibition is enough," said Hartmut Frank, one of the curators. He said viewers should focus on the architecture itself instead of politics.

"China is undertaking large-scale urban constructions. We hope an exhibition like this can prompt a dialogue about urbanization between our two countries,"

Frank said.

In Hartmut Frank's mind, it could be a huge loss for the country if it seeks only economic development while neglecting the preservation of historical architecture. "After the exhibition, I hope China will give more thought to its urban culture and history," he said.

Apart from the exhibition, the Goethe-Institut is planning another academic conference for Chinese and German architects to discuss on the question "What is cultural architecture?"

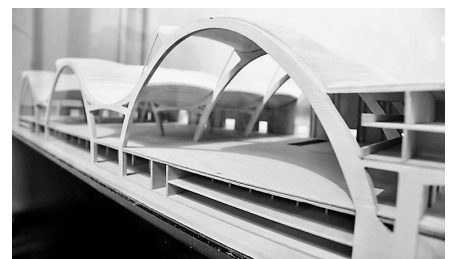
Collected works were selected with the help of Germany's Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (IFA) and the Federation of German Architectural Archives. ■

798 Art Center

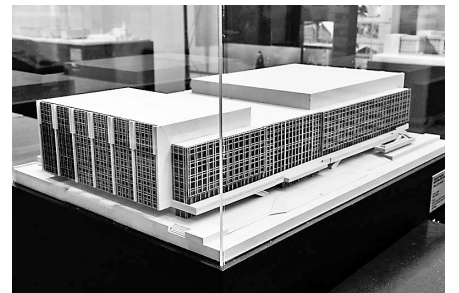
⌚ 10 am - 6 pm, through November 8

📍 Hall 706, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

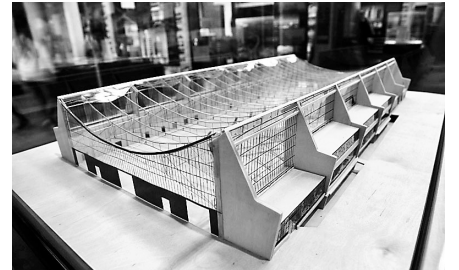
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Photos by Goethe-Institut



Architectural models at the exhibition



Yoon, the planner of Last Man Standing

Photos by Yoon

Hip-Hop Contest Opens Door for Pop Exchange

BY YANG XIN

Supported by the Korean Cultural Center in China, Last Man Standing 2014 is pitting the best hip-hop dancers from China and Korea against each other.

2014 marks the second year of the pop dance competition. As an annual contest, Last Man Standing 2014 is expected to break records in not only number of participants but also guests and judges.

More than 600 top-class dancers have signed up for the competition.

Organized by South Korea's Mother Entertainment, the competition will include a Korean musical presented by Hualang Music Troupe.

The hip-hop movement has been part of the Korean mainstream since the early-1990s and has been gaining international attention. Aside from mainstream

K-pop infused hip-hop, there is also an underground scene that has developed throughout the country.

Although hip-hop is not a Korean creation, the country has wholly adopted the style in K-pop, the musical genre that has won hundreds of millions of fans all over Asia. The spread of Internet video is introducing more people to the dance and musical genre than ever before.

Chinese pop culture is comparatively less innovative, with a heavy focus on dance skills and profitability. It has a long way to go before it can begin turning talented dancers into pop stars. ■

Beijing Modern Music Research Institute

📅 October 25 and 26

📍 68 Yunjing Nan Dajie, Tongzhou





Italy's Language Week Shows the 'New Europe'

BY YANG XIN

The opening ceremony for Italian Language Week 2014 was held at the Italian Embassy in Beijing on October 13. The ceremony kicks off a week of events intended to promote the study of Italian language and culture in China.

In spite of its name, this year's "language week" will run for two weeks and end on October 25.

Co-organized by the Italian Embassy Cultural Office and the Embassy of Switzerland in China, the event is open to the general public but targets Chinese students majoring in Italian or related studies.

Themed "Portraying the New Europe," the weeks' events will bring together such Italian and Chinese writers as Antonio Pennacchi, Paolo Di Stefano, Andrea Berrini, Wang Gang and Xu Zechen to discuss liter-

ature and work – an important subject in modern Europe.

Italy has been pushing hard to introduce the world to its culture as the current EU President. One of the most anticipated events organized by the Italian Embassy Cultural Office is an exhibition of classical Baroque art.

"Rome and Baroque Art" opened at the National Museum this April and will remain through February 28. The collected works present Roman art in the 17th century and show the evolution of Italian painting and sculpture through the works of such master artists as Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Alessandro Algardi and Pietro Da Cortona.

The country is also promoting its 2015 Milan World Expo. The exhibition, "Milan: The City of Books," opens October 24 and lasts for a month. The collected historical images present the

city as the capital of publishing and the city of bookstores.

Promotion and protection of the Italian language and culture are important concerns for both Italy and Switzerland. The cantons of Ticino and Grisons are populated by Italian speakers, and approximately 8 percent of Switzerland considers Italian its mother tongue.

Renowned Swiss author and poet Flavio Stlopini has been invited to share his experience in storytelling with Chinese readers. Famous for his achievements in tourist literature, Stlopini is an expert in sketching stories that are both immersing and lively.

The culture center also screened *Marcello, Marcello*, an Italian film directed by Denis Rabah Grenier that demonstrates traditional Italian custom. ■

Dutch Days Brings the Best of the Netherlands

BY YANG XIN

The Netherlands Embassy in China is bringing Dutch Days to the capital with a series of cultural activities, political visits and business networking events from October 29 to November 8.

As a concept started by Netherlands Consulate in Shanghai in 2012, Dutch Days offers a space for cultural exchange, networking and political diplomacy between China and the Netherlands. Earlier this year, it held events in Shanghai, Wuhan and Chengdu.

This time around, Dutch Days in Beijing will begin with the Dutch National Ballet's performance of *Giselle* on October 30 and 31. The performances will be held at the National Centre for the Performing

Arts (NCPA).

The ballet *Giselle* is a perennial favorite. Patricia Boccadoro, a professional dance editor, called *Giselle* the most perfect of the Romantic ballets 'because it is not only visually breathtaking, but deals with real people. Everyone knows what it is to fall deeply in love with someone you have no right to, or to flirt selfishly with a young girl and break her heart.'

Apart from the artistic performances, Dutch Days will also be a time for political dialogue.

Liliane Ploumen, the Dutch minister of Trade and Development, will be visiting China with a large business delega-



tion. Eberhard Van der Laan, mayor of Amsterdam, will also lead a trade delegation to China.

While in Beijing, Van der Laan will present the opening of an exciting photo exhibition themed "Still/Life – Contemporary Dutch Photography" by Foam, the prestigious photography museum in Amsterdam with the presence of Eberhard van der Laan, mayor of Amsterdam.

This exhibition will be on display starting October 31 at Three Shadows Photography Art Centre.

Dutch Days in Beijing will be conclude with performances by the Netherlands Dans Theater (NDT). This renowned modern dance company will be at the NCPA on November 7 and 8, after which it will begin a tour of other Chinese cities including Shanghai and Suzhou. ■



Marriott Jixian Opens Medicinal Stone Hot Spring, Entertainment Facilities



Marriott Jixian Hotel is located in Jixian, Tianjin, which is known as the back garden of Beijing and Tianjin. The hotel is famous for its outstanding scenery and comprehensive service.

Recently, the hotel has added a new Medicinal Stone Hot Spring and other entertainment facilities.

Medicinal Stone Springs

Medicinal stones, also known as longevity stones, are produced by volcanoes. The natural mineral rocks contain five macro-elements and 18 trace ele-

ments that aid the human body. The stones reduce carbon dioxide, nitrate radicals and heavy metals, soften hard water, dissolve minerals and suppress bacteria.

Marriott Jixian Hotel Spa combines these mineral rocks with its hot springs to help customers relax and strengthen their immune system. The Medicinal Stone Hot Spring Spa is set in a 2,000-square-meter house with tropical plants. The spa offers guests a series of hygienic treatments that provide vitamins and antioxidants.

Combined with the hotel's top-class massage service, the medicinal spas can help guests to purify their bodies and slough off pressure and fatigue.

Entertainment Facilities

The Marriott Jixian Hotel targets families, and the new entertainment facilities completed last month are perfect for this group. The hotel offers entertainment facilities for every age, with playrooms for children, recreation rooms for teens and golf and chess for adults. The hotel also has karaoke rooms and a swimming pool.

The Marriott Jixian Hotel has 282 rooms, including eight suites and eight villas. Its amenities include a 1,900-square-meter banquet area with two grand halls and eight multi-function halls. All come equipped with advanced conference facilities.

The hotel's Marriott Chinese Restaurant serves delicious Cantonese, Sichuan and Jixian cuisine. The Gongchu Restaurant has Teppanyaki and an open kitchen.

Marriott Jixian Hotel was the first Chinese Hotel to advocate low carbon living. Emissions created by a guest are recorded on a key card and printed as a "carbon bill" at checkout.

In addition, the hotel has cooperated with Roots & Shoots Environment Protection Agency and joined in the project to plant a million trees in the growing deserts of Inner Mongolia. To date, it has planted 2,000 poplar trees to help hold down the desert sands. ■

Marriott Jixian Hotel is a branch of Marriott Hotels, a global leader in lodging companies based in Bethesda, Maryland. The group operates more than 4,000 properties and 690,000 rooms in 78 countries and territories.

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Dongcheng-Chaoyang Model School Featured at October Education Seminar

Teachers from Beijing Jingshan School and representatives from Beijing Education Media, the Chinese Institute of Building Environment and Energy and the Beijing Fangxing Rongchuang Real Estate Development Company met for an education seminar at Beijing Jingshan-Chaoyang School on October 12.

New policies for education reform

announced earlier this year have led to an imbalance in education resources and a growing demand for homes near top schools.

In order to relieve the demand, education officials have been working to improve primary and middle schools throughout the capital. Beijing Jingshan School is being presented as a model for other

schools preparing to make the transition to quality-oriented education.

Beijing Jingshan School administrators said schools should leave 40 percent of the day open to students so they can explore on their own.

They should also attach more importance to extracurricular training and research, and incorporate experiments

into class education.

Beijing Jingshan-Chaoyang School is operated by the Education Commission of Chaoyang and Dongcheng Districts.

The school, consisting of multifunctional classrooms, garden-style restaurants and a large playground, will open in September 2015. ■

(By Shu Pengqian)